The Importance of Outreach in the Watershed Planning Process

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What's so great about outreach?

- Communication helps discussions to <u>proceed more smoothly</u>

- Dialogue can <u>identify unknown $$resources$$</u> and problems

- Promotion of the process <u>builds understanding</u>, support

- Water resource management work requires an inclusive, transparent, cooperative, <u>methodical approach</u>

- <u>Motivation is needed</u> to support collaborative action

The key to successful outreach:

- <u>targeting</u> your message to a
- specific <u>audience</u> to
- elicit a specific <u>response.</u>
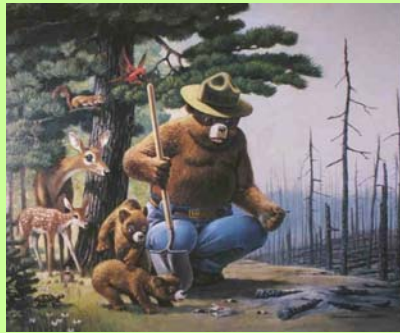
Who are we outreaching to?
(Who are our stakeholders?)

- Various Tribal organizations (in-reach)
- External State agencies involved as partners
- Elected and other public officials
- Non-governmental organizations
- Students and others in academia
- Potential volunteers and partners
- Citizens, voters, the public
- All of these can be stakeholders ...

Getting In Step
A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns
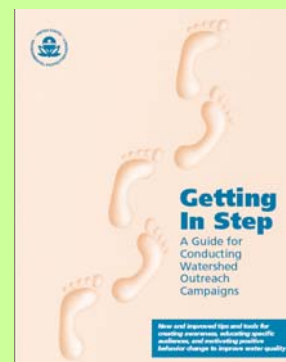
What is a stakeholder?

- A group or individual who:
  - has the responsibility for implementing the decision.
  - is affected by the decision.
  - has the ability to impede or assist in implementing the decision.


Why are stakeholders important to the process?

- Ensures that concerns are factored into the decisions made
- Shares responsibility for decisions
- Enables partnerships to be formed t combine financial resources
- Shares implementation of the selected management practices
- Establishes a framework for plannin and conducting management activities

Where do we find these stakeholders?

- www.epa.gov/surf
  - Find orgaizations in your watershed here
  - Build partnerships and ask for more sources
- Search the Web
  - Use keywords geared toward your work
  - "water quality" "stream conservation" etc.
- Contact your regional EPA office
  - Ask for further contacts
  - See if anyone else is looking for partnerships
- Attend local water quality conferences
  - Build partnerships with local experts
- Work with your tribal government
  - Look for sponsorships
  - Advertise volunteer opportunities

For best results, coordinate the watershed planning effort with other federal, state, and local activities
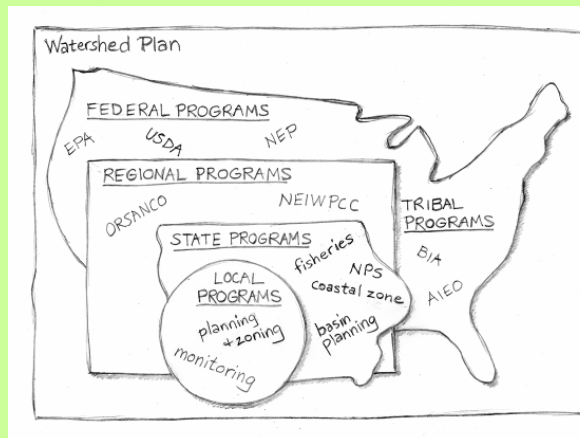
Stakeholder Issues of Interest
"Different strokes for different folks"

- Local Groups
  - Volunteers
  - Church groups
  - School groups
- Regional Groups
  - Chesapeake Bay Program
  - Great Lakes Program
- Governmental Organizations
  - US EPA
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - US National Park Service
- Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Policy Organizations
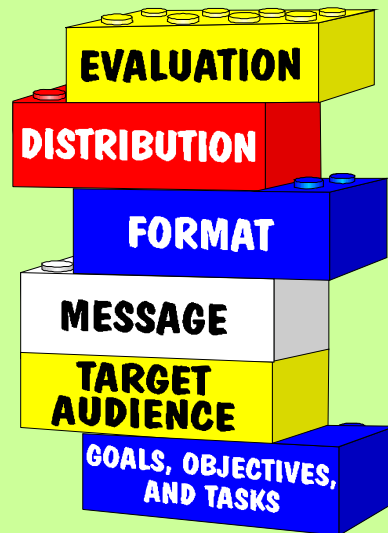 - Conservation Organizations (Audubon, Sierra Club)

How do you "do" outreach?

- Build <u>awareness</u> of the process and issues.
- <u>Educate</u> stakeholders on actions needed.
- Motivate individuals to take <u>action</u>.
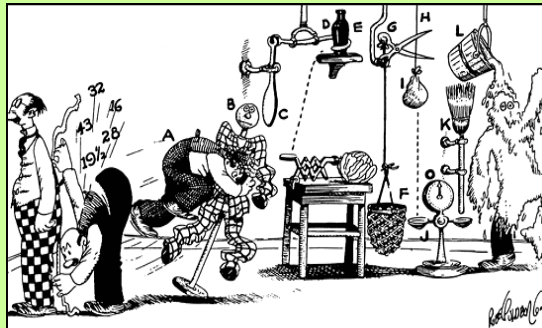
The Basic Steps of Outreach

Objectives

- Define outcomes that are:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant
  - Time-sensitive

Objectives -- Example

- Over the next 2 yrs, reduce fertilizer applications to residential lawns by 30% through education, increased soil testing, and promotion of natural landscapes.
    - Develop and distribute 5 newspaper inserts on lawn management to residents in the next 12 months.
    - Host lawn care workshops every other month for the next 2 yrs

Target Audience

- Research your prospective audiences
    - Focus groups
    - Phone interviews
    - Pre/post surveys
    - Public agencies
    - Community leaders
    - Census bureau
    - Trade associations

Message

- Specific to target audience
- Should have a clear benefit to the audience targeted
  - Improves/protects water resources
  - Costs less
  - Protects public health
  - Improves the economy
  - It's the law

Message development rules

- The teenagers rule
  - you must be able to explain the issue or problem to a group of teenagers

- The people rule
  - people concerns (drinking water, recreation, stewardship, etc.) often outrank biological values or "ecosystem" issues

Message development rules

- The solutions rule
  - identify and discuss problems, but <u>give people hope</u> that viable solutions exist
  - talk about <u>specific approaches</u> or policies that can address the problems
  - identify practices that <u>have been implemented</u> locally or regionally to deal with similar problems

Message development rules

- The words rule:

<u>Cold and prickly</u>	<u>Warm and fuzzy</u>
preservation........................	conservation
t & e species zone….............	wildlife habitat
regulations.............….........	safeguards
development restrictions.....	local controls
managed growth….............	responsible development

Format: Displaying the Message

Evaluation

- 3 kinds of evaluation:
  - <u>Planning</u> – will the plan achieve the objectives?
  - <u>Process</u> – are tasks assigned, resources adequate?
  - <u>Impact</u> – did our message resonate with the target audience? Did we achieve our objectives? How can we further refine our approach?

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